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Borough of Thetford



ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

together with the

report of the

Sanitary Inspector

for the year

1951

STAFF:

Medical Officer of Health
ROBERT N.C. McCURDY, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.
LEONARD G. HOWELL, M.I.Mun.E., F.S.I.A.

Additional Sanitary Inspector & Asst. Surveyor.
R.C.R. ROBINSON, M.S.I.A., A.R.San.I.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year ended December 31st, 1951.
To the Thetford Borough Council.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the sanitary circumstances, health and vital statistics of your Borough for the year 1951.

In most respects the health of the Borough has been good. The birth rate has risen, and is now appreciably above the County rate and also the National rate which has continued to fall.

The death rate rose, partly owing to the epidemic of influenza in the early part of the year, and remained above the County and National rates which, however, also rose. The figures for the number of stillbirths and of deaths of infants under one year are too small to be statistically significant.

There was a fall in the number of deaths from tuberculosis, which has averaged 2 per year during the past 6 years. Following the presentation of my Annual Report last year, I suggested that a visit by the Mass Radiography Unit operating in East Anglia would be of great value to the health of the Borough. I am glad to be able to report that, at the time of writing, a visit by the Unit is expected shortly. This Mass Radiography Unit has a large area to cover including a number of fairly large towns, that they have decided to fit in a visit to Thetford is largely due to the excellent response by the townspeople to the appeal for volunteers for x-ray which I made a few months ago.

Deaths from motor vehicle and other accidents rose to a high figure for the size of the population.

The total number of cases of infectious diseases notified fell from the high figure for the previous year, this was due to the smaller measles epidemic in 1951. The number of cases of pneumonia, mostly associated with influenza, increased. Notifications of tuberculosis fell.

National Assistance Act, 1948.

No action was taken during the year under Section 47 of this Act.

Food Poisoning Outbreaks.

One outbreak involving two cases of food poisoning was notified during the year. The causal organism was not identified, although the milk supply was suspected as being the source of the outbreak.

General Statistics.

Area in acres	7,096
Population (estimated by Registrar-General at mid-year)	4,456
Number of inhabited houses	1,444
Rateable value at 31st December, 1951 ..	£20,714. 0. 0
Product of Penny rate at 1st April, 1951. ..	£85. 0. 0
Council Houses completed during 1951	41

Medical Statistics.

<u>Births</u>	Male	Female	Total
Live births	35	45	80
Stillbirths	1	1	2

Population at mid-year, births, birth-rate, stillbirths, stillbirth rates, during the past five years.

	1947.	1948.	1949.	1950.	1951.
Population	4,346.	4,378.	4,388.	4,385.	4,456.
Births (total)	102.	82.	69.	72.	80.
Birthrate per 1,000 of population	23.5	18.7	15.7	16.4	17.9
Stillbirths	2.	3.	0.	0.	2.
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population	0.46	0.68	0	0	0.45
"per 1,000 total births	20.6	35.3	0	0	24.4

Deaths.

	Male	Female	Total.
All ages	29	33	62
Infants under 1 year.	0	1	1

The cause of death of this infant was a congenital abnormality.

Population at mid-year, deaths, deathrate, infant deaths and Infant mortality rate during the past five years.

	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Population	4,346.	4,378.	4,388.	4,385.	4,456
Deaths	68.	62.	62.	54.	62.
Deathrate per 1,000 of population	15.6	14.2	14.2	12.3	13.9
Infant deaths	1	3	4	0	1
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	10.3	36.6	58.0	0	12.5

Deaths from certain selected causes during the past five years.
(figures as available.)

	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Tuberculosis	2	2	1	3	1
Bronchitis and Pneumonia	0	2	2	2	3
Other notifiable infectious diseases	0	0	0	0	0
Motor vehicle and other accidents	0	1	2	1	5
Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	0	1	0	0	0
Cancer	6	11	12	2	2

Deaths according to ages, (compiled from returns submitted by the District Registrar)

Age group.	Male	Female	Total
Under 1 year	0	1	1
1 and under 5	1	0	1
5 " " 10	0	0	0
10 " " 20	1	0	1
20 " " 30	2	0	2
30 " " 40	0	0	0
40 " " 50	1	2	3
50 " " 60	1	1	2
60 " " 70	6	5	11
70 " " 80	9	11	20
80 " " 90	6	13	19
90 and over	2	0	2
Totals	29	33	62

Causes of death at ages above 1 year and below 50.

Age group	Sex	Cause
1 to 5	Male	Congenital heart disease.
10 to 20	Male	Myasthenia gravis
20 to 30	Male Male	Misadventure Road accident.
40 to 50	Male Female Female	Misadventure. Cancer. Cancer.

In addition one male over 70 died as the result of an industrial accident.

Deaths from all causes (Registrar General's short list)

List No.	Cause	Male	Female	Total.
1	Tuberculosis, respiratory	1	0	1
14	Cancer	0	2	2
16	Diabetes	1	0	1
17	Vascular lesions of nervous system.	5	2	7
18	Coronary disease, angina ..	1	4	5
19	Hypertension with heart disease	0	1	1
20	Other heart disease	12	14	26
21	Other circulatory disease ..	0	1	1
22	Influenza	1	4	5
23	Pnuemonia	2	1	3
28	Nephritis and Nephrosis	0	1	1
31	Congenital Malformations ..	1	0	1
32	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	1	2	3
33	Motor vehicle accidents	2	0	2
34	All other accidents	2	1	3
	<u>Totals</u>	29	33	62

The following table compares birth rates, death rates, etc., in this Borough with those of England and Wales and of the Administrative County of Norfolk in 1951.

	England and Wales	Norfolk	Thetford M.B.
Birth rate per 1,000 of population	15.5	14.8	17.9
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population	0.36	0.36	0.45
Death rate per 1,000 of population	12.5	12.4	13.9
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	29.6	29.5	12.5
Tuberculosis death rate per 1,000 of population	0.31	0.17	0.22
Tuberculosis case rate per 1,000 of population	-	0.85	1.6

Infectious Diseases notified during the past five years.

Disease.	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Tuberculosis, all sites ..	9	3	6	11	7
Cerebro-spinal fever	0	0	0	0	1
Scarlet fever	0	3	1	2	0
Whooping cough	5	61	16	68	52
Erysipelas	0	1	2	2	2
Ophthalmia neonatorum ..	0	0	0	0	1
Dysentery	0	1	0	2	3
Measles	9	189	3	150	46
Poliomyelitis	2	0	0	4	0
Encephalitis	0	0	0	0	1
Pneumonia	3	6	22	6	18
Puerperal pyrexia	1	1	0	1	0
Food poisoning	0	0	1	0	2
Infectious jaundice	25	0	3	5	1

Infectious Diseases notified in 1951, by ages.

Disease.	Under 1 yr.	1-5	5-10	10- 15	15- 25	25- 45	45- 65	Over 65	Total.
Tuberculosis, all sites	0	1	1	1	0	4	0	0	7
Cerebro-spinal fever	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Whooping cough	10	19	19	0	1	0	3	0	52
Erysipelas	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Ophthalmia neonatorum	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dysentery	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Measles	1	16	21	1	3	4	0	0	46
Encephalitis	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pneumonia	0	0	1	1	0	3	5	8	18
Food poisoning	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Infectious jaundice ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Infectious Diseases notified in 1951, by month of notification.

Disease.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Tuberculosis, all sites. ..	1.	2.	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	7.
Cerebro-spinal fever	0	0.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.
Whooping cough	30	9	3	3	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	52.
Erysipelas ..	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ophthalmia neonatorum ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1.
Dysentery	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2.	0	0	0	3.
Measles	0	0	25	18	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	46.
Encephalitis ..	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.
Pneumonia	4	8	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	18.
Food poisoning	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.
Infectious jaundice	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.

The following table shows the number of cases on the tuberculosis register at 31.12.51 compared with 31.12.50.

	Respiratory			Non-Respiratory			Grand Total
	M.	F.	Total	M.	F.	Total	
31.12.50	3	7	20	9	8	17	37
31.12. 1	10.	7.	17	6	6	12	29

On the occasion of Mr. Howell's retirement at the end of 1951, we, his colleagues on the staff, extend to him our very best wishes for a speedy restoration to full and active health.

In conclusion I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee and my colleagues on the staff for their support and help during the year.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

ROBERT N.C. McCURDY,

Medical Officer of Health

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

for the Year 1951.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply.

The water supply is derived from a deep well into chalk within the districts' boundary. This supply has remained satisfactory both in quality and quantity throughout the year.

Practically all the houses within the district have a piped water supply, either direct into the house or to within the curtilage of the house.

Water samples were taken during the year and submitted to the Public Analyst for both Chemical and Bacteriological examination. Seven samples were also submitted to the Public Health Laboratory Service for Bacteriological examination only. A copy of the Chemical Analysis Report is given as an appendix.

The undermentioned extensions to the water mains were laid during the year:-

- (i) A 3 inch main from the existing main in Ickniel Way to serve new Council Houses erected in Ickniel Close.
- (ii) Approximately 1,027 yards of 7 inch main off the existing 7 inch main from the Waterworks in Mundford Road via Croxton Road and Vicarage Road to link with the 4 inch main in Norwich Road. Inter-connections were made in two places from the new 7 inch main to the existing 3 inch main in Vicarage Road in order to give an increased supply of water to the houses in this road. It would appear that the house water services are so corroded in many cases that little benefit has been experienced by many householders.
The new main was to boost water supplies in the area in which it was laid.

Drainage and Sewerage.

During the year under review work has been progressing on the general sewerage scheme for Thetford. The Sewage Disposal Works have been completed and three-quarters of the town now has a sewer available. A start was made on reconnecting properties to the new sewer in the Gravity Area, i.e., properties having cesspools from which there was an overflow through filters to a street drain. 23 such re-connections were effected.

Closet Accommodation.

The only change during the year was the addition of 47 water closets for new houses and the conversion of 7 vaults to pails. These alterations now give totals of 450 W.C's, 697 Pails, and 304 vaults within the Borough.

Conservancy.

Night Soil Collection and disposal has been carried out as in previous years from premises with pail closets and, in addition, 98 Vaults and 72 Cesspools were emptied.

Refuse Collection.

The collection of house refuse remained the same as in previous years and covers all the area. Means of disposal of refuse is by tipping.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The following table summarises the inspections made during the year by our Sanitary Inspector:-

Description.	Inspections	Informal Notices.	No. Abated.
Drainage of Premises	32	5	5
Survey of house drainage for connections to new sewer ..	313	-	-
General Nuisances	78	29	29
Housing Defects	63	14	12
Infectious Diseases	11	- 6 disinfections	-
Rats and Mice	94	-	-
Dangerous Buildings	11	8	6
Verminous and filthy premises ..	15	- 5 disinfestations.	-
Housing investigations with M.O.H.	35	-	-
Factories	96	15	15
Bakehouses	6	-	-
Butchers Shops	17	-	-
Food Shops and Premises	32	6	6
Restaurants and Cafes	14	2	2
Fried Fish Shops	12	1	1
Ice-Cream Premises	24	-	-
Dairies	8	-	-
Market Stalls	43	-	-
Other Shops	17	-	-
Complaints received and recorded	97		

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949.

The Council employ one man on a part time basis for Rodent Control.

The undermentioned inspections and treatments have been carried out in accordance with the provisions of the above Act which states that - 'It will be the duty of every Local Authority to take such steps as may be necessary to secure as far as is practicable that their district is kept free from Rats and Mice':

	<u>Type of Property.</u>				Total
	Local Authority	Dwelling-Houses	Agri-cultural	All Other (Including Business & Industrial	
No. of properties inspected as a result (a) of notification or (b) otherwise.	(a) - (b) 20	36 138	- 12	5 43	41 213
No. of properties found to be infested by rats.	Major 1 Minor 1	- 59	- -	- 5	1 65
No. of properties treated by Local Authority.	2	59	-	5	66

Food Inspection.

(i) Milk Supply.

Milk Distribution has been satisfactory and the two dairies situate in the district have maintained a high standard of cleanliness.

(ii) Meat and Other Foods.

A considerable quantity of Meat and Other Foods were examined during the year resulting in the following list of food being condemned as unfit for human consumption:

Tomato Puree	..	..	..	..	6,394 lbs.
Fresh Fish	..	..	..	..	282 lbs.
Beef Sausages	..	..	..	..	274 lbs.
Canned Ham	..	..	..	..	52 lbs.
Corned Beef	..	..	..	..	55 lbs.
Meat	..	..	..	..	12 lbs.
Various tinned foods	..	..	..	..	160 tins.

There is no Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse in the district but one slaughterhouse is used for the slaughter of pigs under licence for home consumption. Post mortem inspections were carried out on 26 pigs.

Food Premises.

There are six premises registered in accordance with Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, for the manufacture of prepared and preserved foods and they have been regularly inspected throughout the year. Informal action was taken in respect of contraventions of the requirements of Section 13 of the Act, and a satisfactory standard is being achieved.

Inspections have been carried out at Cafes, Restaurants and retail food shops. Where necessary advice was given and letters have been sent requesting works of repair or improvements in the general facilities in relation to Section 13 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

Byelaws made by the Council under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, for securing the observance of Sanitary and Cleanly Conditions and Practices in connection with the Handling, Wrapping and Delivery of Food and Sale of Food in the Open Air have given added powers in ensuring that the public receive a clean article of food. Advice has been given to persons handling food and a good standard is being achieved both in food premises and in vehicles used for the transit of food.

Ice-Cream.

There is one premise registered for the manufacture and sale of ice-cream and fourteen premises are registered for the sale only.

Nine samples were submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for bacteriological examination and the reports received showed the samples to be graded as follows:-

Grade One	..	..	..	3
Grade Two	..	..	..	6

FACTORIES ACT, 1937 and 1948

Part I of the Act.

1. Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises.	Number on Register	Number of		
		Inspec- tions	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted.
(i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority.	3	8	4	-
(ii) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	34	72	11	-
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	TWO HOUSING SITES	16	-	-
<u>TOTALS.</u>	39	96	15	-

2. Cases in which defects were found.

Particulars.	Number of Cases in which Defects were found				No. of cases in which Prosecutions were Instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	Referred by H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	4	4	-	-	-
Overcrowding (S.2)	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6) ..	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary offences against the Act (S.7) ..	17	17	-	1	-
Other offences against the Act	-	-	-	-	-
<u>TOTALS.</u>	21	21	-	1	-

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

LEONARD G. HOWELL,

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.

APPENDIX.

Lincolne Sutton and Wood,
Analytical and Consulting Chemists
Clarence House,
6. Clarence Road,
Norwich.

30th January, 1951.

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS OF WATER

Sample received from: Sanitary Inspector, Guildhall, Thetford.
Marked: Public Supply - tap in Corporation Yard.
Appearance when received: Clear
Colour: Nil (A.P.H.A) Units Odour: Nil
(Hazen) Taste: Nil
Re-action: Practically neutral pH 7.4

RESULTS OF CHEMICAL ANALYSIS IN PARTS PER MILLION.

Ammoniacal nitrogen:	Nil	Hardness as CaCO ₃ :
Albuminoid nitrogen:	trace	Total 268 = 19°Clark
Nitrate nitrogen:	8.0	Carbonate (temporary) 178
Nitrite nitrogen:	Nil	Non-carbonate (permanent) 90
Chlorine as chlorides:	22	Alkalinity as CaCO ₃ : 196
Oxygen absorbed		Free Carbon dioxide: 16.5
(4 hr., 27°C.) Nil		Total solids (at 180°C) 370
		Metals in solution: Iron 0.045

BACTERIOLOGICAL RESULTS.

Number of colonies developing per ml. in 48 hours at 37°C: Nil
Presumptive coliform organisms - Absent in 100 ml.
B. Coli: Absent.

OPINION.

This water is of very good organic quality and its bacteriological condition is excellent. It is of moderate hardness and the free carbonic acid is reasonably low, so that the reaction of the water is on the alkaline side of neutrality. Such a water is not likely to exert any appreciable solvent action on metals. The trace of iron in solution is not of consequence, and other metals are absent. This water is very suitable for drinking and general purposes.

LINCOLNE SUTTON AND WOOD.

(Signed) ERIC C. WOOD.

